Title: My Answer to Kerenski & Co.
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The Petersburg Telegraph Agency is spreading the news that the Russian Provisional Government has formally filed charges against me. I do not know what they are accusing me of. The charges do not seem to differ much from the one for which the Tsarist government threw me into the Peter and Paul Fortress in 1906: an attempt to overthrow state power by armed force. My crime seems so monstrous to the representatives of justice and democracy, freedom and humanity in Russia, that the mere possibility of a personal meeting with me or of receiving support from me would be enough for them to condemn the person in question, even to hang him. For these revolutionaries, who have so far found no judge for the bandits of the Tsarist regime and who abolished the death penalty to save their lives, have already filled the prisons with freedom fighters, restored the system of informers and spies, and are murdering worse than the Tsar's henchmen. I have supported the Russian revolutionary movement, insofar as it was socialist, with all the means at my disposal throughout my life, and I will continue to do so. You fools, why do you care if I gave Lenin money? Lenin and the others you name never asked for or received any money from me, either as a gift or a loan. But I gave them and many others worse than money or dynamite. I am among those who spiritually nourished the revolutionary will of the Russian proletariat, which you now want to eradicate but cannot. After all, it was Dan-Gurevich, who now, with Tsereteli, is playing the executioner of Russia behind the back of the unfortunate and half-mad fool Kerensky, who accused me in 1906 of having determined the tactics of Russian Social Democracy during those revolutionary days. And Miliukoff, the purposeful and exceedingly astute political pioneer of Russian capitalism and imperialism, who now flatters Kerensky and his puppet masters, couldn't find enough words of criticism for the Russian Social Democracy, which had allowed itself to be seduced by me into its revolutionary tactics. For the Russian bourgeoisie would rather allow the bloodiest defeats to be brought about and the destruction of the empire than tolerate the political rule of the socialist working class. You don't see this because you don't want to. Or do you believe that these people are serious about their fear of Prussian reaction? But surely they would prefer a semi-reactionary regime to a far-reaching democracy. If the Russian banking world, notoriously composed of gamblers, adventurers, and escaped convicts, the Russian industrialists, and the Russian agrarians were certain that Prussia would protect them from Social Democracy and ensure the security of their capital and land holdings, they would immediately and without hesitation, if only they had the power, conclude peace with Germany, paying no more attention to the treaties with the Entente than to the ideological phrases with which they are now entangling you fools. But they know that a peace concluded now would mean the collapse of imperialism in Russia as in the entire world, and therefore they do not want peace. They know that if they conclude peace

before the revolutionary power of the proletariat has been broken, the land question would absolutely have to be resolved in the interests of the masses, and therefore they do not want peace. But their authority is no longer sufficient to continue the war, for the Russian people's longing for peace has destroyed Tsarism, which is why they are now using you as an excuse. You have given yourselves up to this, traitors to the revolution, to socialism, to the freedom struggle of the Russian people. For what you are doing is not your own tiny personalities, but the authority of the Russian Revolution. This authority has accumulated over a century; it is soaked in the blood of the noblest spirits of the Russian people, glowing with their boldest thinking. So great and radiant is this halo that surrounds you that one does not notice the political monkey business you whiners are performing. When the Tsar and his Klevrets claimed they were waging a freedom struggle against Prussian reaction, the lie was obvious; people believe you, and yet you lie even more than they. For if it was wrong at the beginning of the war to see only the Prussian spiked helmet in Germany and to ignore German Social Democracy, industry, science, literature, and social policy, one must be more than blinded not to perceive that the war, like Russia country, has also revolutionized Germany, that Germany is facing a tremendous transformation in political, economic, and social terms, and that only the war itself now hinders the democratization of Germany, Russia, and all of Europe; one must nevertheless admit that the German people have clearly enough expressed their desire for a peace without annexations and contributions, that is, without discrimination against others, and, after learning of the secret treaties of the Entente, one would be shamelessly lying if one wanted to deny that the plans for conquest were forged on that side. If you were serious about the program of peace without annexations and contributions, which you put forward under pressure from the people, you would have to advocate for immediate peace. But if you now accept the Entente's plans to bring about military victory, you will contradict your own peace formula. Your dispute over the Entente's peace goals, your attempts to commit them to your peace formula, are miserable squabbles as long as you support the Entente's offensive with the Russian army masses. For, if your allies should gain military superiority, you will not be able to prevent them from exploiting this superiority politically and economically. One cannot be so stupid as not to see this. Therefore, you are lying! Intoxicated and at the same time frightened by the abundance of power that fell into your lap, you are acting like tyrants. While the task given to you by the revolution was to democratize the country, you have merely assumed the omnipotence of the Tsar himself and ruled as before. The masters have changed, the rule has remained. The words have changed, the content has remained. The old formula of divine right has been replaced by the new formula of revolution. And the revolution itself has thereby become a mere phantom. And the more you do this, the more you fear for your power and the more despotic your policies become. Weren't the workers of Petrograd, in alliance with the army, the ones who overthrew the old regime? And how do you rule Petrograd now? Through a state of siege, through Cossack rule! You brought Petrograd down with the help of reactionary regiments you gathered from the provinces. Do you

really believe you can promote or secure the revolution if you yourselves tear down the foundations of the revolution? You inherited from the revolutionary struggles of 1905 the demand to convene the Constituent Assembly. But you are delaying this convocation, first for formalistic reasons, then for no reason at all. Why? I'll tell you, you hypocrites and scoundrels! This is happening because the Constituent Assembly would decide on peace, while the only thing holding you back is war. You are thwarting the solution to the land question by delaying the convening of the Constituent Assembly. You are either cheating or allowing yourselves to be cheated. For that is, after all, the desire of the landowners. They think: time gained is everything gained; the more the revolution disintegrates, the easier it will be for us to deal with the peasants. Meanwhile, by continuing the war, you are accumulating the national debt. This will increase taxes, which the peasant, in particular, will have to pay. The peasant dreams of increasing his land and does not realize that, in the meantime, due to the enormous increase in the national debt caused by the war, all of Russia's land has been mortgaged to the English, French, and Americans. As was the case with the abolition of serfdom, the peasant will now have to pay "ransom money." The ransom money that the Russian peasant will have to pay in the form of taxes for his land far exceeds the highest selling price of this land in the pre-war period. And you are increasing these burdens by continuing the war. Thus, you have detached yourselves from everything that constituted the essence and power of the revolution; a deep gulf is opening between you and the proletariat, between you and the masses of the people, and your only hope is: Kornilov and the gallows! Instead of peace, new mass sacrifices; instead of taxes on the land; instead of democracy, autocracy! Autocracy! Instead of one tsar, several small ones! But when it is pointed out to you, you whine about the downfall of the revolution and the empire. You are so filled with the consciousness of the importance of your insignificance that you confuse the fate of the empire with your own little ambitions. Yesterday's traitors, you now sniff out high treason and treason everywhere and suspect the personal motives of your opponents. You have unleashed a spy sniffing operation and created an atmosphere of suspicion and denunciation that are worse than in the first days of the war. Meanwhile, for five months you have not found the time to bring the documents of tsarist corruption to public discussion. You do not do this, although you should be aware that the best moral support for the revolution lies in exposing tsarist corruption. Or are you perhaps held back from doing so by the same considerations that held you back from publishing the secret diplomatic documents: namely, that the French and English imperialists allied with you might be exposed in the process? While you are searching for German money and branding any merchant who acquires German goods a political criminal, you do not notice, or do not want to notice, how English, French, and American money is corrupting the state, enslaving the Reich economically and subjugating it politically. After the outbreak of the revolution, the English government is said to have approved a credit of 800 million francs for war propaganda in Russia. Why don't you ask your friend Lloyd George what happened to the money? Have him show you receipts. Just ask him what the political agitation in Russia cost him? You yourselves

have seized the state coffers and are spending the money on things whose political expediency still needs to be proven. The tsarist regime, after all, had a budget that had to be examined and approved. Where is your state budget? Where is the body that approves your individual items, to which you are accountable? You draw on the lavish resources, throw the money out the window with both hands, and that's the end of it. No one would say anything if these were the first days of the revolution. But the matter has already dragged on for five months and will drag on even longer. Because you keep postponing the convening of the Constituent Assembly. You issue loans, bind the Reich for eternity, grant concessions, mortgage or sell entire territories without a popular representative to take a stand on them. Not even the Tsar allowed himself that! Germany, with its Reichstag and its Social Democrats, didn't seem democratic enough to you; you didn't even want to sit at the negotiating table with the German government; it was far too Prussian for you. You portrayed yourselves as world saviors and liberators. But the political conditions you created in Russia differ from those in Prussia only in confusion and arbitrariness, the omnipotence of the government, the lack of any democratic control, the satrapy, and the unscrupulousness of political practices. You see, I knew it could come to this because I participated in the Russian Revolution of 1905 as a German Social Democrat. I highly value the revolutionary energy and intellectual impetus of the Russian proletariat, but I also know that, compared to the German working class, with its widespread yet centralized trade union and political organizations, developed through decades of tenacious, painstaking work, this Russian proletariat represents only a loose mass, little trained in the class struggle. It is capable of sacrificing itself for a political cause, but lacks the moral courage, insight, or political determination to take the fate of the Reich into its own hands. It therefore allows itself to be led by the revolutionary intelligentsia that surrounds it. I knew and know that this revolutionary intelligentsia, which had been eliminated by the Russian bourgeoisie in its class struggle, had become revolutionary not for socialist reasons, but for revolutionary reasons. That is, that socialism, to which it is inwardly alien, in its entire individualistic way of thinking and feeling, was necessary for it to gain ties with the workers. Therefore, even before the revolution of 1905, I predicted the defection of the Russian intelligentsia from the socialist working class at the moment the revolutionary goal, the overthrow of the tsarist government, was achieved. This already occurred in 1906. The transition was not smooth, and for some it was quite difficult, but it proceeded inexorably. When the war came, the remnants of the Russian intelligentsia, with their intellectual leaders at the forefront, swarmed over to the camp of bourgeois imperialism. What happened during the revolution? It was fought for by the workers and the army: by the former out of their socialist convictions, by the latter because they despaired of victory and blamed the tsarist regime for the defeats. Thus, in the army, there was a nationalist ideology that had transformed into revolutionary ideology. ism. Now the bourgeois intellectuals, entrusted with government power by the workers' and soldiers' councils, attempted to bring nationalism out of the army's revolutionary spirit. Given the enormous increase in political self-confidence that the revolution had

brought with it, they partially succeeded, but they encountered the conscious resistance of the socialist proletariat, especially in Petrograd. At first they hesitated, allowing themselves to be pushed step by step, but finally, carried away by the applause of the bourgeoisie, encouraged and whipped up by their allies, and deceived by their own army leadership, they plunged onto the offensive. The consequences were civil war and new defeats. This is the work of Kerensky. He ultimately did what Miliukoff, whom he first fought, wanted. But Miliukoff has a clear political goal, and Kerensky does not. Miliukoff wanted Constantinople, meaning he wanted the Entente to fight for Russian war aims. Kerensky renounced Russian conquests, meaning he led the Russian armies to fight for the Entente. Miliukoff is a clear-headed man who knows what he wants from his own perspective, whereas Kerensky is a confused enthusiast. Therein lies his agitational strength and his political weakness. In Russia, fools who spoke tongues have often played a role at court and among the people. They called them "Yurodiwiy." Kerensky is such a political half-fool, who speaks in tongues. The revelation that speaks from him is the interest of the imperialist bourgeoisie. But what is now taking place in Russia is historical proof of the correctness of the tactics adopted by the German Social Democracy in the war. Two considerations had to be taken into account in our decision: 1. the danger of tsarism, 2. the possibility of a democratization of Russia. One stood against the other. That a victory of the tsarist armies would be a tremendous danger to democracy and socialism, was admitted even by the most determined minds among Russian socialists, such as Lenin, Martoff, and Trotsky. They wanted the defeat of tsarist Russia. But they shied away from the consequence that this defeat could only be brought about by the military resistance of Germany or the Central Powers. For me, who for a generation stood on the foundation of German Social Democracy, the intellectual inhibitions that held my Russian party friends back from drawing the ultimate conclusions from their point of view did not exist. But the more they had to admit to themselves that I was logically right, the more they strove to construct an outward opposition between me and them, resorting to the most dreary principled zeal, intertwined with the most absurd insults. This was impossible to do otherwise and is one of those things of which Dante says: "Be silent and pass by!" Now, if even the Russian side told the German Social Democrats that the defeat of the Russian armies was necessary, the German Social Democrats evidently had no choice but to support their own armies. Other Russian sides, Plekhanov and others, said otherwise. They promised us, in the event of a victory of the tsarist armies, the democratization of Russia, and we, too, would then be enlightened and blessed by this Russian democracy. That was also the formula with which the French and English socialists, democrats, and liberals sought to whitewash their alliance with the Tsar. It was self-deception at best. In the event of an Entente victory, the Tsar would certainly have to share his power with the powerfully rising capitalist class, but the consequence would not be democracy, but imperialism and a Russian national liberalism, which would further strengthen Russia's armies and leave its mark on all of Europe. That would be a greater threat to democracy and socialism than if Tsarism had emerged victorious in the struggle

with the bourgeoisie. Then the Russians came along again and said: revolution! The words sounded good, and some in our ranks were seduced by them. Now we have the Russian Revolution, and we see that it follows its own laws, that it is undergoing a development that, both in its beginning and in its outcome, is strongly influenced by military events. If Kerensky's offensive were successful, patriotism would revive in Russia, thereby giving the bourgeois elements more prominence, they would resume their political plans, Miliukoff would reappear, and soon the Russian bourgeoisie would have the straw man Kerensky and his accomplices, whom it had to use for a time, at side and take matters into their own hands. But the Russian armies have suffered another defeat, and so the Russian Revolution is taking a different course. The victories of the German armies created the Russian Revolution, and it still needs military support. The more complete Russia's military defeat, the greater the democratic effects of the Russian Revolution will be. On the contrary, every military success of Russia or the Entente leads to a political setback; the power of the central government immediately increases, freedom is restricted, the rights of nations are curtailed, the masses are repressed, and the propertied classes rise. These are the facts revealing themselves before us. Now we have historical proof that we would have plunged the empire and democracy of Europe into the abyss if we had followed the advice of Karl Liebknecht and the Russian revolutionaries and tried to fight the Russian armies not with armed force, but by unleashing a revolution in our own country. I am certain that the revolutionary movement in Russia will soon grow so strong that it will establish peace. Kerensky and his band of fools, by reviving the repressive instruments of the tsarist system, will be unable to hold their own against the tide. If they tumble back down the level of power to which events have carried them, one will be amazed at how tiny and foolish they are. But with every storm, the shallowest dirt floats to the surface. If revolutionary Russia succeeds in bringing about a general peace, it will strengthen itself and the democracy of Europe immensely. We, too, want a general peace. Anyone who claims otherwise is a shameful liar. We want peace for our own sake, because the war has cost us so many victims and has paralyzed our economic activity and our cultural life for three years already. That is why peace on one front is of little use to us if the war continues on the others. We want the restoration of peaceful activity, trade, and commerce throughout the world. For without it, we cannot exist. But it would be folly and a crime if we were to reject a single offer of peace for that reason. We will accept peace, wherever it comes from, as long as it is sincerely meant. We do not ask what happened before the war or during the war, whether we were wronged, whether someone wanted to destroy us. Whoever now wants peace under honorable conditions, without discrimination on either side, can have it from us. The same principles will have to be adopted in Russia as well. For they are just. And an injustice is not made better by committing it not for oneself but for one's allies. The world needs peace and Russia needs it; no special considerations must prevent it. The greatest danger to the revolution now is war. For the Russian people want peace above all else. Nothing is more foolish than the attempt by Russia's current rulers to discredit the idea of peace by pointing to the

alleged desires of the old regime to conclude a separate peace. This only proves that even the Tsar and his entourage had finally realized that they had to yield to the people's desire for peace. For them, of course, it was already too late. But if anything can make a counterrevolutionary movement in Russia even more popular, it is the idea of peace. Whoever, whether a revolutionary mass, a general at the head of an army, or a reactionary conspiracy, overthrows the government and brings peace to the country thereby gains tremendous support among the people. That is the danger that threatens the Russian Revolution. Therefore, in closing, I accuse Kerensky, his masterminds, and his followers of having betrayed the interests of the revolutionary proletariat and, through their indecision on the question of peace, are playing into the hands of the anti-revolutionary movement! Peace—that is now the only revolutionary solution. General peace immediately, or first a special peace, then general peace. Peace above all! Berlin, August 9, 1917. Parvus.

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